

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Essner Manufacturing, Inc.

Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center

Essner Soars with Aerospace Quality Standard

Client Profile:

Essner Manufacturing produces precision sheet metal fabrications and machined parts for a wide variety of customers and industries. Located in Fort Worth, Texas, Essner provides its customers with a wide array of services, ranging from individual detail parts to turnkey assemblies, all manufactured to customers' specifications. Brackets, panels, electrical chassis, and electronic containment boxes made by Essner have been used in everything from oil field service to the newest fighter aircraft. In business since 1939, Essner is a growing business in a dynamic industry with a significant mix of aerospace component parts manufacturing. The company employs 35 people.

Situation:

Essner wanted to evolve after 50 years in the commercial sheet metal fabrication business. They set a goal of becoming a turnkey provider of precision metal parts and assemblies to the defense aerospace and high-tech industries. While attention to quality had been emphasized over the years, Essner realized they needed to move up to the next level of traceability, reliability and consistency required by the defense aerospace market they wanted to serve. The company had quality ratings in the mid-nineties and delivery ratings in the lower 90th percentile. Customer satisfaction was generally good, but they wanted to reinforce the need for continuous improvement. Essner made the commitment to become registered to either the ISO 9001:2000 or AS 9100B Quality Management System (QMS) standard. During this review period a major customer indicated a requirement for AS 9100B certification in order to do business on a large new aerospace program. Essner became familiar with the Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center (TMAC), a NIST MEP network affiliate, about seven years ago through the local Manufacturers Association of North Texas. Some early successes with lean manufacturing and facility layout led them back to TMAC for their QMS.

Solution:

TMAC assisted Essner in writing a new quality manual integrating the procedures required under AS 9100B. TMAC also trained staff on implementation of the system and audit preparation. AS 9100B incorporates the ISO 9001:2000 quality management system requirements and specifies additional requirements for a QMS for the aerospace industry. All activities that affect the quality and delivery of a product are coordinated through the AS 9100B QMS, including quoting, order receipt, planning, purchasing, manufacturing, inspection and delivery. "The complexity of implementing an AS 9100B system is a challenge that Essner met head-on" says Dave Johnson, TMAC Project Manager. Essner passed their registration audit with flying colors in April 2004 and passed their annual surveillance audit in May 2005. President Dale Westerfeld indicates Essner's continuous improvement journey led them to the certification level and they are pleased with the results.

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Results:

- * 99 percent quality rate.
- * 99 percent on-time delivery.
- * Increased business in 2004.
- * 50 percent rework cost reduction as a percentage of sales.
- * Increased visibility as a quality supplier.
- * Pride of ownership for all Essner staff.

Testimonial:

"Attaining the AS 9100B certification caused us to have a seriousness of focus on our products and customers. We learned "good enough" isn't. Our people are now solidly committed to excellence and it shows."

Dale Westerfeld , President